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Comment

Baring of Secrets Stings U.S. Aides

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WASHINGTON — A new law containing criminal penalties may be needed to discourage former government officials from making premature disclosures of secret negotiations or operations in which they took part, according to administration sources.

Recent books and magazine articles have revealed material that is considered damaging to U.S. interests abroad, these sources maintain.

The most recent case involves a onetime official of the Central Intelligence Agency, Thomas W. Braden, who signed an oath of secrecy in September, 1954, when he left the agency to enter private life.

BRADEN'S article in the latest Saturday Evening Post, "I'm Glad the CIA is 'Immoral,'" placed him in technical violation of the National Security Act of 1947 and the Espionage Laws, Act of 1948, according to congressional sources.

But the first has no teeth in it and simply enjoins the director of the CIA to see that

provisions of the law are respected. Under the Espionage Laws, an intent to harm the United States or aid a foreign country must be proved.

Braden, ironically, set out to "defend" the CIA, by his own account, in revealing how he enlisted the aid of U.S. labor leaders and others in anti-Communist activities with secret subsidies from the spy agency.

In the article, he says he created the idea to give cash and advice to such groups as the National Student Assn. and other legitimate private organizations in cold-war struggles with communism.

"With friends like Braden, the CIA doesn't need enemies," one official asserted.

IN THE form he signed upon leaving the CIA, Braden swore "never to divulge, publish, reveal by writing, word, conduct or otherwise, any information which might impair the national defense and security and particularly information of this nature relating to intelligence sources, methods and operations . . . specifically, CIA operations."

A congressional source voiced the underlying concern



Thomas W. Braden

here about Braden's article. "If he can ignore the oath he took with impunity, other former officials of the CIA might be prompted to reveal their secret operations," he said. "You know that book and magazine editors and publishers are paying top prices for inside stories about anything, especially the CIA."

Of equal concern to administration officials is that if a CIA man cannot be trusted to keep his secrecy oath, the

agency's whole operation faces impairment.

BUT THE problem goes beyond the CIA. The U.S. ambassador to Kenya, Glenn W. Ferguson, felt obligated this week to charge that his predecessor, William Attwood, had violated the elementary standards of diplomatic reticence in a recent book he wrote, "The Red and the Blacks."

Attwood's account of his years as ambassador to Guinea and later to Kenya kicked up a storm in Nairobi.

Kenya Atty. Gen. Charles Njonjo accused Attwood of "a breach of faith and confidence" for revealing private conversations.

Ferguson weighed in with a pledge not to write about his activities in Nairobi for five years after he leaves his Kenya post.

Attwood is now an executive with Cowles Publications.

STATE Department officials are expecting still further disclosures, possibly of an embarrassing nature, with the publication next month of a book by Roger Hilsman, who served as an assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research and later for Far Eastern affairs.

Hilsman was privy to many secret deliberations. A publisher's blurb on the Hilsman book, "To Move a Nation," quotes historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., as saying Hilsman was "in the thick of foreign policy crises of the Kennedy years." And that is what worries many State Department officials about the for the forthcoming volume.